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ABSTRACT

Persons with normal hearing, especially in the public services, should make concerted efforts to become adept in forms of total communication so that more avenues to the everyday world are opened to deaf people. Awareness of the deaf world among the hearing and being involved with it are possibly just as important as those services established specifically for the deaf. The planning of library programs for the deaf, which should be done in conjunction with deaf members of the community, should commence with the establishment of priorities, perhaps including staff training for manual communication or the assumption of an advocacy role for the development of services. Resources for expanded library services can be explored in the areas of personnel, materials and equipment, and budget. There are a variety of programs and services which can be implemented to expand the public library's informational, instructional, and facilitative functions in direct aid to the deaf or for increased awareness among the hearing population. A list of agencies for the deaf provides additional sources for information. (Author/SL)

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Library Services With Deaf People;

# A Guide to Concepts Activities Resources

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# library services with deaf people

*FIRST, a few things to think about:*

Deaf people are not "mute" nor are they "dumb." Deaf persons have normal vocal cords.

Even after years of speech training, a deaf person's speech may not be readily intelligible to the general public...for the very simple reason that most deaf persons have never heard the sound of human speech to imitate.

Many deaf persons use sign language to communicate. This is a visible language using distinct units called signs instead of spoken units called words. It is often combined with fingerspelling, voice, and facial and body gestures to effect total communication.

One hardship suffered by persons with a hearing loss is the isolation, real or fancied, that their handicap imposes upon them. This is increased by the embarrassment people with normal hearing sometimes show in their presence. These situations can be eased by courtesy and a deeper understanding of the handicapped.

The fact that a hearing person attempts to communicate is frequently more important than how facile one is in that communication. But persons with normal hearing, especially those in public services, should make concerted efforts to become adept in forms of total communication so that more avenues in the everyday world are opened to deaf people.

Public libraries exist for the entire community and for all people. Especially for deaf patrons, we need to remove any possible anxiety from reference interview situations.

Many of the suggestions outlined can be implemented at a low cost and with little effort, but it is important to remember that all people have a right to services and that provision of "special" services should not always, or in the long range, depend on outside funding.

Awareness of the deaf world among the hearing and being involved with it are possibly just as important as the services we establish specifically for the deaf.

Any programs we develop should be done in cooperation with community people who happen to be deaf.

*THEN, some things we can do:*

# ESTABLISH PRIORITIES

**Among other items, we might consider:**

1 - Manual communication as a necessary staff skill
2 - A clear definition of the extent to which "physically handicapped" includes deaf people
3 - Use of professional associations and educational institutions for reinforcement
4 - Employment of deaf persons on paid and on volunteer bases for general functions and in special services to those whose hearing is impaired, not employment just for technical services
5 - Assumption of advocacy role for development of services and for passage of necessary legislation

# EXPLORE RESOURCES

**Under PERSONNEL we might consider:**

1 - Personal experiences and knowledge of present staff about hearing impairment and sign language skills
2 - Available expertise of persons with impaired hearing in the community
3 - Available referral services for information about hearing impairment, both within and outside the political jurisdictions
4 - Clinical and evaluative services
5 - Rehabilitational services
6 - Educational programs
7 - Available community programs--social, recreational, civic

**Under MATERIALS we might consider:**

1 - General materials useful with persons having hearing impairments
2 - High interest/low vocabulary materials
3 - Non-print materials -- non-voice films, captioned films, video tapes

**Under EQUIPMENT we might consider:**

1 - Audio-visual
2 - Video
3 - TTY (Teletypewriter)

**Under BUDGET we might consider:**

1 - Government--federal, state, municipal; both those funds now being expended and possible new sources
2 - Volunteers--service clubs such as Lions International and Quota International

# PLAN and INITIATE PROGRAMS and SERVICES

**INFORMATIONAL SERVICES might include:**

1 - Strengthening our materials on deaf people and deafness--information on sign language, problems of deaf persons, non-print items, signed books, wordless picture books, bibliographies, kits with games and toys, resource and reference files
2 - Extending traditional services, such as telephone reference, through TTY
3 - Providing general programs of the library (e.g., stock-buying and consumer protection for adults, story hours and puppet shows for children) extended to deaf patrons by means of an interpreter or by being signed by the librarian
4 - Having a news service for deaf people through the TTY or newsletters
5 - Having displays and programs on ways of communicating--sign language, code, fingerspelling, alphabets, mime
6 - Establishing contacts with organizations, churches, and rehabilitation centers to make library resources known --use personal visits, TTY, newsletters, brochures

**INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES might include:**

1 - Providing the manual alphabet on cards or in booklets
2 - Having programs for hearing parents of deaf children
3 - Having programs for hearing employers of deaf employees

**FACILITATIVE SERVICES might include:**

1 - Contacting Gallaudet College and other national agencies as resources for their directories of information, book catalogs and interlibrary loan
2 - Making meeting rooms available to groups
3 - Encouraging cooperation among various agencies concerned with different aspects of services to deaf people
4 - Organizing the parents of deaf children

# EVALUATE PROGRAMS

**Keeping in mind:**

1 - Feedback from staff, community, and organizations
2 - Coverage of programs in professional literature of libraries and of the deaf
3 - Methods by which programs can be incorporated into the regular, on-going budget
4 - The importance of transferring these ideas to other special non-user groups

# or, books are just the beginning

*FINALLY, we can contact:*

**for information about captioned films–**

Media Services and Captioned Films
Division of Educational Services
U. S. Office of Education
Washington, D. C. 20202

**for information about TTY–**

Teletypewriters for the Deaf, Inc.
P. O. Box 622
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

**for information about interpreters for deaf persons–**

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
P. O. Box 1339
Washington, D. C. 20013

**for information about community resources–**

see The American Annals of the Deaf for the
Directory of Programs and Services for the
Deaf in the United States*
5043 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20016
*Directory issued annually in April, $5.00

**. . . and for further information . . .**

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Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

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